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Coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report highlights major developments in the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda during 2008 and the first half of 2009. It underlines the raising of awareness on the part of the international community of the issues and challenges associated with rapid urbanization, including their consequences for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. This heightened awareness has led to an increase in the scope and depth of responses to these issues at the global, regional and country levels.

The report, while focusing on outcomes and results, also provides succinct analyses of their underlying rationale and processes. The outcomes and results include:

- Follow-up to the decisions of the twenty-first session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and, where relevant, decisions arising from its recently concluded twenty-second session. This part of the report reviews how the implementation of the medium-term strategic and institutional plan, within the context of system-wide reform, is contributing to the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda at the global, regional and country levels, including the participation and contribution of UN-Habitat to the "Delivering as one" initiative at the country level;

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- Responses emerging from the growing realization on the part of the international community on the need to focus on the social, economic and environmental consequences of rapid urbanization in order to attain the Millennium Development Goals. This includes the growing number of collaborative arrangements and partnerships with and among agencies and organizations within the United Nations system and with non-governmental organizations.

The conclusion of the report is that the emerging but robust response by Governments and Habitat Agenda partners to the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda and related Millennium Development Goals is a strong indication of the increasing internalization of the urban agenda by the world community. This realization calls for an equally robust decision by the Economic and Social Council to adopt and promote sustainable urbanization as a cross-cutting issue for more effective follow-up action within the existing social, economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development.

In the light of the convergence of the global and local environmental agendas and the critical role and contribution of cities in mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change, the report also calls for the convening of a third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development in 2016.

I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to paragraph (c) of Economic and Social Council decision 2008/239.

2. The report is presented under five broad sections as follows:

(a) Follow-up to the decisions of the twenty-first session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), including progress in the implementation of the medium-term strategic and institutional plan for 2008-2013;

(b) Coordinated implementation with organizations and agencies within the United Nations system;

(c) Coordinated implementation with intergovernmental and international organizations outside the United Nations system;

(d) Coordinated implementation with other partners, including non-governmental organizations;

(e) Pointers for the future.

II. Follow-up to the decisions of the twenty-first session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

A. Implementation of the medium-term strategic and institutional plan

3. In accordance with the recommendations of the Governing Council at its twenty-first session, UN-Habitat prepared, in close consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives, an action plan for the implementation of its medium-term strategic and institutional plan for 2008-2013. The Committee of Permanent Representatives endorsed the action plan in December 2007.

4. The objective of the action plan is to kick-start a series of strategic and institutional reforms to enhance UN-Habitat's catalytic and pre-investment role in support of the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the human settlements-related Millennium Development Goals. The highlights of these reforms include:

(a) A sharpened programmatic focus and improved programme alignment to fully exploit the comparative advantages of UN-Habitat and those of its partners;

(b) A concerted approach to and framework for normative and operational activities at the country level (Enhanced Normative and Operational Framework), including active participation in the "Delivering as one" initiative;

(c) A coordinated approach to advocacy, knowledge management and norm building;

(d) An experimental phase for applying innovative financial approaches for pro-poor housing and urban development.

5. The major outcomes and results of the first phase of the implementation of the medium-term strategic and institutional plan for 2008-2013 action plan include:

(a) The formulation of policy and strategy papers for the focus areas of the medium-term strategic and institutional plan, and of a results-based framework using "SMART" indicators, targets and priorities. These policy documents were presented in draft form to a wide spectrum of Habitat Agenda partners at the fourth session of the World Urban Forum in November 2008 for their feedback and inputs. The sharpened thematic focus contained in these policy documents is based on a careful analysis of the comparative advantages of UN-Habitat and of its partners. Implementation of the plan will not only contribute to improved programme alignment and cohesion, but also to better defining roles and working relations with partners both within and outside the United Nations system.

(b) The development of 33 Habitat country programme documents, including in six of the eight "Delivering as one" pilot countries. These documents mark an important step in the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda at the country level. They are formulated in collaboration with concerned Governments, local stakeholders and United Nations country teams. They represent a first step in implementing the Enhanced Normative and Operational Framework at the country level, which aims to combine and leverage UN-Habitat policy, capacity-building and technical cooperation activities to contribute to more concrete and timely outcomes and results in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and related Millennium Development Goals.

(c) The initiation of a concerted approach to advocacy, partnerships and knowledge management spearheaded by a global campaign on sustainable urbanization. This approach was marked by the establishment of the Cities and Climate Change Initiative and by the simultaneous launch of the *State of the World's Cities Report* and the first regional report on cities of the African region at the fourth session of the World Urban Forum. This regional approach is a new dimension of advocacy and of the mainstreaming of the Habitat Agenda as part of a new global campaign on sustainable urbanization.

(d) In accordance with resolution 21/10 of the Governing Council, UN-Habitat launched an experimental initiative in the financing of pro-poor housing and urban development. The initiative is designed to show how it is possible to eliminate one of the biggest barriers to urban poverty reduction by lowering the risks perceived by the domestic banking sector in providing housing finance for the urban poor on a sustainable basis.

6. The above outcomes and results are also referred to throughout the report in conjunction with relevant partners and institutions.

B. Guidelines on decentralization and the empowerment of local authorities

7. With the assistance of the Governments of India and Norway, the Advisory Group of Experts on Decentralization held meetings during the reporting period to develop a strategy for implementation and follow-up to the guidelines on decentralization and strengthening of local authorities that were approved by the Governing Council in its resolution 21/3.

8. A key element of the follow-up strategy is to disseminate the guidelines to a wider policy and operational audience. The guidelines are being packaged with region-specific annotations and are being produced in various languages. UN-Habitat has also held regional consultative meetings with ministers for local government from Africa in Yaoundé in June 2008 and from Latin America and the Caribbean in Quito in July 2008.

9. With the support of the Government of France, and through close collaboration with United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), UN-Habitat continued work with the Global Observatory of Local Democracy and Decentralization, focusing on the compilation of country profiles. The country profiles will enable member States to compare notes and to exchange information on their respective laws.

C. Guiding principles on access to basic services for all

10. Pursuant to its resolution 21/4, the Governing Council established a group comprising of experts and a wide range of stakeholders to solicit further inputs to the draft guidelines on access to basic services for all that were presented to the Governing Council at its twentieth session. Stakeholders included UCLG, representatives of central Governments, public and private service providers and civil society organizations. Representatives from relevant United Nations bodies and regional and international financial institutions also participated actively in the work of the group.

11. With the support of the Government of France and Veolia Environnement, a series of regional consultations culminated with a global meeting on the occasion of the fourth session of the World Urban Forum.

12. The draft guidelines were submitted to and approved by the Governing Council of UN-Habitat at its twenty-second session. The Governing Council, in its resolution 22/8, requested UN-Habitat to develop, in coordination with the Habitat Agenda partners, training instruments and to assist interested Governments to adapt the guidelines to their national contexts. It also requested that the development of tools and indicators designed to support the implementation of the guidelines be coordinated with the ongoing work on the implementation of the guidelines on decentralization.

D. Cities and climate change and the sustainable development of Arctic human settlements

13. UN-Habitat developed a concept note for a project on enhancing the adaptive capacity of Arctic cities facing the impacts of climate change. On the basis of recent research findings by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and other organizations, the proposed project is aimed at advising and supporting Arctic cities and towns that are vulnerable to various impacts of climate change by offering innovative approaches and solutions for urban, regional and national development planning. Under the project, norms for sustainable and harmonious human settlements development would be developed, promoted and implemented.

14. The project is expected to enhance global knowledge and understanding of the impacts of climate change on human settlements and the environment. It is designed to be implemented in collaboration with national, provincial and local authorities, international organizations, universities and research institutes, associations of indigenous people, city networks and the private sector. Discussions on implementation modalities with the UNEP GRID-Arendal Centre are at an advanced stage. An expert group meeting is planned for 2009, at which methodological challenges and funding arrangements will be further discussed.

15. The General Assembly, in its resolution 63/221, underscored the importance of the Habitat Agenda and the mandate of UN-Habitat regarding the issues of climate change. It encouraged "Governments to promote the principles and practice of sustainable urbanization and strengthen the role and contribution of their respective local authorities in applying those principles and practice, in order to improve the living conditions of vulnerable urban populations, including slum dwellers and the urban poor".

16. In order to facilitate greater coordination and a more concerted response to the challenges facing cities in the area of climate change mitigation and adaptation, UN-Habitat established the Cities and Climate Change Initiative, spearheaded by a global campaign on sustainable urbanization. The Cities and Climate Change Initiative builds on the comparative advantages of UN-Habitat in working with urban local authorities and its expertise in urban planning and management to support the efforts of all spheres of government in reducing the ecological footprint of cities while improving their safety and resilience to the effects of climate change.

17. Cognizant of the fact that cities are major contributors to greenhouse gas emissions and are highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, the Governing Council, at its twenty-second session, adopted two resolutions related to sustainable urbanization: resolution 22/1, in which the Governing Council recommended the convening of a third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development in 2016; and resolution 22/3, on cities and climate change. Both resolutions will greatly boost awareness of the contribution of the Habitat Agenda to the global climate change agenda and will further enhance a coordinated approach to their implementation.

E. Urban youth development

18. The results of a survey on youth-led development initiatives and 200 good practices in youth-led development from around the world were disseminated at the fourth session of the World Urban Forum. The Opportunities Fund for Urban Youth-led Development was launched at the same session. The application and operational guidelines and application forms have been prepared and widely shared with Habitat Agenda partners interested in urban youth issues. The call out for the first round of applications was launched on 25 March 2009. At its twenty-second session, the Governing Council adopted resolution 22/4, on strengthening the development of urban young people. In that resolution, the Governing Council encouraged Governments to give priority and support to youth-led development initiatives, invited multilateral agencies, Governments, the private sector and civil society to listen to youth and develop policies on their development based on participatory processes; and invited multilateral agencies, Governments, the private sector and

civil society to promote the Opportunities Fund to youth-led organizations within their respective regions and to encourage such organizations to apply for the Fund. It also invited multilateral agencies, Governments, the private sector and civil society to contribute voluntarily, wherever possible, to the Opportunities Fund. It requested the Executive Director to ensure that urban youth development issues are reflected substantively in future issues of the *Global Report on Human Settlements* and of the *State of the World's Cities Report*.

19. The UN-Habitat Youth Empowerment Programme continued to work in the Kibera slum and the Mavoko informal settlement on the outskirts of Nairobi to provide on-the-job training for youth through the construction of their own youth training centre. The Programme will also serve as a regional hub in East Africa for innovative and appropriate technology training in construction. The programme aims to equip young people with managerial and organizational skills, certification and apprenticeship experience that will allow them to compete successfully for jobs in the construction industry. One hundred and fifty youth have graduated in the fields of construction, leadership and ICT training.

20. In a similar vein, an international youth-led urban development platform, the World Urban Youth Forum, has been established to bring together youth formations that are otherwise not represented in the formal youth structures that function in the global, regional and national arenas. A youth advisory board was also established to contribute to the decision-making and implementation processes of UN-Habitat work on youth issues. The Governing Council, in its resolution 22/4, requested the Executive Director to provide the necessary mechanisms for the World Urban Youth Forum to be recognized as an integral part of the World Urban Forum.

F. Sustainable public-private partnership incentives for attracting large-scale private-sector investment in low-income housing

21. Working relationships with the private sector marked a major shift in 2008 as a result of the medium-term strategic and institutional plan. The basic concept moved beyond the realm of corporate social responsibility to looking at core business practices for sustainable urbanization. To this end, UN-Habitat enhanced its advocacy and knowledge management work and initiated new forms of partnerships and cooperation at the global and country levels with, among others, international and domestic financial institutions, water utility companies and the real estate sector.

22. The objectives of the UN-Habitat approach to public-private partnerships are twofold. The first objective is pre-investment packaging whereby efforts in policy reform, capacity-building and technical assistance are designed to mobilize a mix of public expenditures and private investments in housing and urban development. The second objective is to show governments and international and domestic financial institutions that business models for pro-poor housing and urban development are indeed viable and beneficial to economic development.

23. UN-Habitat advocacy knowledge management work intensified on the human settlements financing tools and best practices initiative. Work under this initiative has begun on the systematic documentation of asset-based approaches to community development, including cooperative approaches to housing development, social investment funds, urban community development funds, community-based housing

finance initiatives and community mortgage programmes. The initiative has further strengthened research on the links between the economy and housing and between the economy and finance.

24. Upon the invitation of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, UN-Habitat launched the Water Operators Partnership Programme, a network that is anchored with and supported by Abu Dhabi Water and Electricity Authority, the Google Foundation and the Government of Spain. The Programme provides municipal water operators in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean with a platform for exchanging strategies and applying best practices in the delivery of clean drinking water to informal settlements and slums.

25. On the public-private partnership front, UN-Habitat pursued joint activities with private sector companies that seek to make use of the core competencies and comparative advantages of those companies. The objectives are twofold: to improve the living conditions of the urban poor and to harness the capacity, know-how and technology of the private sector in support of actions aimed at mitigating and adapting to climate change. Partnerships were implemented on various issues with India and Nepal, and in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, among other countries.

G. Africa fund/financing mechanism on slum prevention and upgrading

26. In 2008 UN-Habitat provided technical and substantive support to the second African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development, held in Abuja in July 2008. The main theme of the conference was "Goal 7, target 11: overcoming the finance and resource challenges for sustainable housing and urban development". The Conference brought together ministers and experts who adopted the Abuja Resolution and an action plan that provides guidelines on financing housing, slum upgrading and urban development.

H. Women's land and property rights and access to finance

27. UN-Habitat continued to provide technical assistance and advisory services to women's land access trusts in Ghana, Kenya, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania, while providing support for the formation of new land access trusts in Burundi, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Rwanda. Educational and peer-learning tours were organized for community leaders working with these new trusts.

28. The experience in Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania shows that a combination of credit enhancements, community savings and technical assistance can make a big difference in facilitating access to land and housing by the urban poor and by poor women in particular.

29. UN-Habitat prepared a gender equality action plan in consultation with a wide range of partners, independent experts and international and intergovernmental organizations. The plan was presented to and endorsed by the Governing Council of UN-Habitat at its twenty-second session in April 2009. Fully compliant with the medium-term strategic and institutional plan for 2008-2013, the plan will contribute

to improving programme focus and alignment and to coordination within and outside the United Nations system.

I. Strengthening the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation: experimental financial mechanism for pro-poor housing and infrastructure

30. UN-Habitat continued to strengthen its catalytic role in facilitating cooperation between domestic banks, local authorities and urban poor organizations to mobilize and package domestic capital, public investment and community savings for slum upgrading. These efforts were buttressed by the launching of experimental reimbursable seeding operations and other innovative mechanisms. This facility will offer loans and credit enhancements through domestic financial institutions to stimulate private investment in housing and basic services to underserved populations. The goal of the experimental reimbursable seeding operations and other innovative mechanisms is to develop innovative models showing how financing for affordable housing can be undertaken by combining the efforts of the private sector, microfinance and community financing arrangements. The lessons from the experiments will help inform policies and strategies that have the potential of benefiting millions of urban poor who currently do not have access to formal credit facilities.

31. UN-Habitat further developed its working relationships with financial institutions such as the Bank of America as part of its effort to mobilize capital for reimbursable seeding-type initiatives in Latin America, Asia and Africa. The focus of these and other arrangements is on initiating credit enhancement instruments to domestic banks to reduce the perceived and actual risks in investing in pro-poor housing.

32. The short-term implications and longer-term impact of the current financial and economic crisis on the availability of funds for and the willingness of financial institutions to engage in low-income housing and infrastructure finance was the subject of a dialogue during the twenty-second session of the Governing Council. Experts and representatives of all Habitat Agenda partners called for member States to establish sound and conducive frameworks and mechanisms to enable extended public and private investment in slum upgrading and prevention, affordable housing and urban development including infrastructure and basic services. The dialogue also called for UN-Habitat to continue its efforts in testing new methods of delivering affordable housing finance through such programmes as the Slum Upgrading Facility and the experimental reimbursable seeding operations and other innovative mechanisms.

33. The Governing Council, at its twenty-second session, strongly endorsed the idea that a special event at the General Assembly be devoted to affordable finance for pro-poor housing and urban development and recommended that such an event should take into account, among other things, the recommendations emanating from the dialogue on affordable housing finance and climate change.

J. Flagship reports

34. The *Global Report on Human Settlements 2007*, entitled *Enhancing Urban Safety and Security*, addressed three major threats to the safety and security of cities: urban crime and violence, insecurity of tenure and forced evictions, and natural and human-made disasters. It analysed worldwide trends with respect to each of these threats, paying particular attention to their underlying causes and impacts and good policies and best practices that have been adopted at the city, national and international levels in response to these threats.

35. The report highlighted several policy responses aimed at reducing crime and violence, ranging from effective urban planning, design and governance to community-based approaches through which communities take ownership of crime and violence prevention initiatives, to the reduction of risk factors through a focus on groups.

36. The *State of the World's Cities Report 2008/2009* adopted the concept of harmonious cities as a theoretical framework to understand today's urban world and as an operational tool to confront the most important challenges facing urban areas and their development processes. For that purpose, it focused on three key areas:

(a) Spatial or regional harmony, by which it explored the determinants of urban growth and decline and the consequences of asymmetrical regional development and rural-urban disparities;

(b) Social harmony, by which it presented a preliminary global analysis of income and consumption inequality at the city level and degrees of shelter deprivation in various cities and how they adversely affect social and economic development;

(c) Environmental harmony, under which rubric it contributed to the climate change debate by presenting data on energy consumption at the city and household levels and showing which cities and urban populations will be most at risk from rising sea levels.

37. The findings of the *State of the World's Cities Report* set the tone for and informed many of the dialogues and deliberations of the fourth session of the World Urban Forum.

K. World Urban Forum

38. The fourth session of the World Urban Forum was held under the theme "Harmonious urbanization: the challenge of balanced territorial development". The theme was supported by six sub-themes that provided the main focus for the four-day session: "Territorial balance in urban development"; "Promoting social equity and inclusiveness"; "Making cities productive and equitable"; "Harmonizing the built and natural environments"; "Preserving the historical roots and soul of the city"; and "A city for all generations".

39. The quest for innovative ideas and practical solutions in respect of these themes was evident in the 6 dialogues, 8 round-table discussions and more than 140 networking events and seminars that took place in Nanjing. Ministers, mayors, academics, community-based organizations, professional associations and

non-governmental organizations and members of the private sector shared their insights and experiences on what would improve the quality of life in the world's growing cities. The inclusive approach adopted at the Forum and in its discussions among all partners represents a model for the future development of cities.

40. Lessons learned from the success of the Forum in mobilizing Habitat Agenda partners, as well as new partners, to engage in dialogue and the sharing of good policies and best practices have been incorporated into the strategy for the global campaign on sustainable urbanization. The campaign, known under the street name of the World Urban Campaign, is an integral part of the medium-term strategic and institutional plan. It will spearhead the advocacy and information activities of UN-Habitat and provide the framework and facility for partnering to further the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

41. At its twenty-second session, the Governing Council, in recognizing that the World Urban Forum has become the premier global event on housing and sustainable urban development issues, called for a certain number of measures to maintain the momentum of the Forum, to firmly anchor the Forum within the formal United Nations calendar of meetings, and to strengthen the synergies between the outcomes of the Forum and the medium-term strategic and institutional plan.

III. Coordinated implementation with organizations and agencies within the United Nations system

A. System-wide coherence

42. The Chief Executives Board, at its meeting of April 2007, recognized that many of the challenges facing the United Nations system could be met only if the system brought to bear its collective capacities in a coherent and mutually supportive manner and that would allow it to deliver as one, especially in dealing with issues related to climate change.

43. UN-Habitat participated in the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs task force on the thematic cluster on sustainable development and human settlements, and provided input in support of greater harmonization of budget submissions to the Office of the Controller.

44. One of the recommendations of the report of the High-level Panel on United Nations system-wide coherence, entitled "Delivering as one" (see A/61/583) was to place the United Nations Development Group directly under the auspices of the Chief Executives Board to improve coherence and coordination on policy, management and development issues. The "Delivering as one" initiative is viewed by UN-Habitat as a unique opportunity to forge a more effective and coordinated response to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda at the country level. UN-Habitat has actively participated in and contributed to all of the main working groups of the United Nations Development Group. It has consistently advocated an inclusive approach to the work of the United Nations country teams.

45. UN-Habitat used its Enhanced Normative and Operational Framework for country-level activities to engage United Nations country teams in six of the eight "Delivering as one" pilot programmes, with the aim of mainstreaming the Habitat Agenda into country programming and priority setting. Lessons learned are being

incorporated into the next phase of the Framework, which will include country support teams for follow-up activities.

B. Inter-agency Standing Committee

46. In May 2008, the Executive Director of UN-Habitat was invited by the Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs to participate in the Principals meeting on the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. In August 2008, UN-Habitat successfully concluded a joint agreement with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, pursuant to which UN-Habitat will provide support for the Committee's emergency shelter cluster and will play a shelter recovery coordination function within the early recovery cluster in Myanmar.

47. Responding to requests from the Inter-Agency Standing Committee protection cluster in Geneva, UN-Habitat fielded several missions to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. UN-Habitat also embarked on the development of a series of tools and guidelines on behalf of the Standing Committee global cluster system addressing post-disaster shelter options, post-disaster land administration guidelines and tools, and post-conflict land tenure guidelines and toolkit. A direct by-product of UN-Habitat membership in the Standing Committee has been improved access to the Central Emergency Response Fund. In the past year, UN-Habitat has received funds for two projects in Pakistan and one project in Nepal.

C. United Nations Industrial Development Organization and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

48. Cooperation continued with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) on the promotion of high-value agricultural-based products aimed for urban markets within the framework of the Lake Victoria Local Economic Development Initiative. Both UN-Habitat and UNIDO, in cooperation with the Common Fund for Commodities, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Food Programme (WFP), provide technical support for the implementation of local development activities that strengthen urban-rural linkages.

D. UN-Water

49. Working under the auspices of UN-Water Africa and in close collaboration with the African Development Bank, UN-Habitat contributed significantly to the work of the African Ministers' Council on Water, including in connection with the first African Water Week, held in Tunis, in March 2008, and the draft Sharm el-Sheikh declaration, a key document presented during the eleventh ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, which took place in June 2008.

E. UN-Energy

50. In April 2008, during the first International Conference on Renewable Energies in Africa, held in Dakar, UN-Habitat was elected Chair of UN-Energy Africa for the period 2008-2010. UN-Habitat has taken part in all UN-Energy meetings and contributed substantively to the debate.

51. In collaboration with UNEP and the Governments of five East African countries (Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and United Republic of Tanzania), the project "Promoting Energy Efficiency in Buildings in Eastern Africa" is being developed with funding from the Global Environment Facility under the focal area on climate change. UN-Habitat has initiated projects in the area of renewable energy technologies to provide environmentally sound urban infrastructure and services. Lessons learned from these clean energy initiatives will be shared among the members of the UN-Energy family.

F. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

52. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and UN-Habitat continue to collaborate in promoting the sustainable urbanization agenda through normative work, research, capacity-building and knowledge management.

53. UNESCO and UN-Habitat are jointly disseminating a series of best practices on social sustainability in historic districts, including two joint publications released in 2008: a manual for local authorities entitled "Historic districts for all: a social and human approach for a sustainable revitalization", and another publication entitled *Best Practices on Social Sustainability in Historic Districts*. Training and learning events using these materials were organized jointly in Seville, Spain, in May 2008, and in Nanjing, China, in November 2008, on the occasion of the fourth session of the World Urban Forum.

G. United Nations Institute for Training and Research

54. UN-Habitat worked together with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) to produce draft guidelines on access to basic services. The two have been helped in their efforts by an expert group comprising representatives of United Nations bodies, the World Bank, UCLG, service providers and non-governmental organizations. UN-Habitat and UNITAR have also begun to work with Veolia Environment to develop guidebooks targeted at elected and appointed policymakers, in response to the need to build capacity to implement guidelines. Veolia Environment is a large private sector firm providing advisory services and technical assistance in the field of the environment and basic services.

55. UN-Habitat and UNITAR are also collaborating on local government training and capacity-building. Within the reporting period, joint needs assessments were carried out in the occupied Palestinian territories. This was followed by training-of-trainers workshops for training of municipal councillors, making use of UN-Habitat capacity-building tools.

H. United Nations Housing Rights Programme

56. UN-Habitat continued its collaboration with various partners as part of the United Nations Housing Rights Programme (UNHRP), an initiative jointly implemented by UN-Habitat and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. UN-Habitat and the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE) cooperated in the updating of housing rights legislation, which was published through the Housing Rights Documentation Centre on the UN-Habitat website. Funded by UN-Habitat, COHRE continued producing the *Housing and ESC Rights Law Quarterly*, a housing, economic, social and cultural rights advocacy tool. UN-Habitat contributed to a project of the High Commissioner on the development of a set of indicators for monitoring compliance with the right to adequate housing.

I. United Nations Environment Programme

57. Cooperation and coordination between UNEP and UN-Habitat has been further expanded and institutionalized. Staff members of the two programmes meet monthly to coordinate their activities and discuss implementation of joint activities. In addition, a new partnership framework, the Partnership Framework 2008-2013, was developed during the period 2007-2008, and was adopted by senior management of both organizations. As a result, a joint implementation plan for 2008-2009 was agreed that focuses on five key areas: (i) cities and climate change, with a special focus on Africa; (ii) eco-mobility; (iii) waste management; (iv) cities: biodiversity and ecosystems; and (v) joint outreach activities.

58. The role of cities in climate change is an increasing focus of attention, given that cities are major consumers of energy and contributors to greenhouse gas emissions. At the same time, urban residents are severely affected by climate change, especially in developing countries, for example, through the destruction of housing and basic services and health threats. Cities must play a major role in any global initiative, if it is to succeed. Their practical action on the ground is essential to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and to protecting their citizens from the effects of climate change.

59. In response to this challenge, UN-Habitat launched the Cities and Climate Change Initiative. The initiative aims to promote dialogue between national and local levels, to raise awareness of the particular vulnerability of the urban poor to climate change, and to develop local government capacity to respond to climate change challenges. The initiative works closely with UNEP, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Development Programme, UNFPA, UNITAR, the World Bank, Cities Alliance, UCLG, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) and other relevant organizations. The Governing Council, at its twenty-second session, adopted resolution 22/3, in which it invited Governments to "widen the geographical scope of the initiative and to expand the range of capacity-development approaches in order to support local authorities in addressing climate change".

60. The two agencies are also intensifying their cooperation to provide a better and wider range of services to local and national governments in the field of urban environment. The aim is to enable cities to better assess and prioritize local

environmental concerns and to have a voice in national and global environmental debates, particularly in areas such as climate change, land-based sources of marine pollution and the use of ecosystems. Helping countries and cities to implement global norms, agreements and conventions will allow them to link global concerns to local issues.

J. United Nations Development Programme

61. UN-Habitat, through United Nations country teams and joint programming with UNDP and other United Nations partners, contributed actively to mobilizing national resources and external support for attaining the human settlements-related Millennium Development Goals. Activities emphasized strengthening local and national capacities in human settlement development and management.

62. To date, 39 Habitat Programme Mangers are operating out of UNDP Offices around the world: 25 in Africa, 8 in Asia and 6 in Latin America and the Caribbean. Habitat Programme Managers proved their worth throughout 2008 by helping to implement the Enhanced Normative and Operational Framework and assisting in the development and approval of UN-Habitat country programme documents in 33 countries.

K. International Labour Organization

63. UN-Habitat and ILO, jointly with UNDP, continue to share tools and experiences on public and private partnerships. During the reporting period two training workshops on pro-poor public and private partnerships were organized, as a result of which the subject of such partnerships has been fully integrated into the annual programme of courses offered by the ILO International Training Centre.

64. In response to the growing challenge of urban unemployment, ILO, UN-Habitat and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, through a grant from the Cities Alliance, are preparing a policy advisory note focusing on integrating employment into city development and slum upgrading strategies and urban infrastructure investments.

L. World Bank Group

65. UN-Habitat and the World Bank Group deepened their working relations through joint programming. The Urban Anchor served as the unit within the World Bank Group for the coordination of joint programming with UN-Habitat. The work was coordinated through two vice-presidencies: the Finance and Private Sector Development Network and the Sustainable Development Network. The vice-presidency for finance also provided advisory support to the Steering and Monitoring Committee of the UN-Habitat experimental reimbursable seeding operation. Joint programming initiatives were also undertaken in support of the Global Urban Observatory, which seeks to monitor trends in urbanization and slum formation.

66. UN-Habitat worked with the Water Anchor of the Sustainable Development Network to launch pre-investment capacity-building in water demand management,

with the aim of accelerating World Bank investments in water and sanitation in select countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. UN-Habitat prepared inputs for the *World Development Report 2009* and the World Bank prepared inputs for the *State of the World's Cities Report 2008*.

M. WHO and UNICEF

67. In a three-way collaboration UN-Habitat, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) are implementing joint projects, including an arsenic mitigation project in Nepal. UN-Habitat is also working closely with UNICEF and WHO in supporting the Government of Nepal in the development of a sanitation programme.

N. Gender equality and mainstreaming

68. As an active member of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, UN-Habitat serves on various task forces, including the Task Force on Violence against Women, which is spearheading a system-wide response to the campaign of the Secretary-General on the theme, "Unite to end violence against women". UN-Habitat also serves on the United Nations Development Group gender task force on strengthening gender mainstreaming at the country level and the gender and water task force.

69. UN-Habitat has forged a partnership with the United Nations Capital Development Fund, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and UNDP to support local governments in Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone and the United Republic of Tanzania on women's safety in urban areas and the promotion of gender equality in local governments.

70. In a similar vein, UN-Habitat reached an agreement with UNIFEM to develop a joint training programme on women's safety audits and to address violence against women in public spaces in cities in Latin America and the Caribbean.

O. Regional commissions

71. During its twenty-first session, the Governing Council mandated UN-Habitat to start preparing a state of the region's cities report series to complement the *State of the World's Cities Report* series. To date, two reports have been prepared in close collaboration with their respective regional commissions. The first *State of the African Cities Report 2008* was prepared jointly with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and was launched at the fourth session of the World Urban Forum. The first state of Asian cities report is due to be launched on the occasion of World Habitat Day in October 2009, the result of a joint effort with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). In a similar vein, preparations are under way for regional reports for Latin America and the Caribbean and for Eastern European States, in collaboration with ECLAC and the Economic Commission for Europe, respectively.

IV. Coordinated implementation with intergovernmental and international organizations outside the United Nations system

A. European Union/European Commission

72. The European Commission (EC) and its humanitarian arm — the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office — have been contributing to UN-Habitat-designed projects in 15 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries designed to improve living conditions of the poorest of the poor. Lessons learned from the first phase of the project are being integrated into an expanded programme involving 30 countries. The programme is designed to build capacity at the local and national levels to achieve the Millennium Development Goals through slum upgrading and prevention policies and improvements in urban infrastructure and services. Negotiations are under way to extend the programme to all 79 ACP member States. UN-Habitat expects that the expanded programme will be launched in mid-2009 during a joint EC/ACP/UN-Habitat high-level conference on urbanization challenges in the ACP countries, to be held in Nairobi.

B. Regional ministerial meetings

73. UN-Habitat assisted in the preparation of the substantive background documents for the second African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development. The Conference theme was "Goal 7, target 11: overcoming the finance and resource challenges for sustainable housing and urban development". The Conference adopted the Abuja Resolution and an action plan that provided guidelines on financing for housing, slum upgrading and urban development in general.

74. UN-Habitat also facilitated the deliberations of a working group on the delivery of the Millennium Development Goals on water and sanitation during the second Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development, which was held in Teheran in May 2008 and led to the adoption of an action plan.

C. Global Parliamentarians on Habitat

75. The Global Parliamentarians on Habitat continued to play a very active role in raising awareness of the policy and legislative issues relating to sustainable urbanization and urban poverty reduction. Members of the group helped shape the agenda of a number of global events to help mainstream the Habitat Agenda and the human settlements-related Millennium Development Goals, including a parliamentarians' round table at the fourth session of the World Urban Forum.

76. Cooperation with the regional chapters of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat enabled UN-Habitat to present and compare its findings on emerging trends and issues in housing and urban development at the global levels with perceived priorities at the regional level. This intensified collaboration between UN-Habitat and regional groups of parliamentarians will allow for improved synergies with the regional ministerial meetings on housing and urban development and will help focus

the production of regional state of cities reports. This synergy will further complement and inform the Enhanced Normative and Operational Framework for country level activities and collaboration with, inter alia, regional financial institutions, the regional economic and social commissions, and other Habitat Agenda partners.

D. Regional development banks

77. The African Development Bank, through the UN-Habitat Water for African Cities Programme, is currently operational in 18 cities in 15 countries. The Bank's Zanzibar Water and Sanitation Project has led to a fast track process for the signing of loan agreements. In Kenya further support for preparatory work for a sanitation diagnostic study for 26 communities in the Lake Victoria South Water Services Board under that project is almost complete.

78. A recent partnership between UN-Habitat and the East African Community has provided a framework of collaboration for expanding the Lake Victoria Water and Sanitation Initiative to another 15 towns in 5 countries. This is to be done in partnership with the African Development Bank.

79. UN-Habitat continued its strategic partnership with the Asian Development Bank. A second memorandum of understanding between UN-Habitat and the Bank was signed in 2007, covering the period 2007-2011. The memorandum commits each of the two partners to provide $10 million in grant funds for raising political awareness, building capacity, implementing pilot and demonstration projects and preparing investment plans for Asian cities.

80. During the reporting period, UN-Habitat entered into a strategic partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank. A memorandum of understanding between UN-Habitat and the Inter-American Development Bank enabled UN-Habitat to initiate in 2008 a number of projects in the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Mexico.

V. Coordinated implementation with other partners, including non-governmental organizations

A. Local authorities

81. Local authorities are front-line actors and the closest partners to central Governments in implementing the Habitat Agenda. Cooperation with local authorities thus cuts across all UN-Habitat work at the global, regional and country levels.

82. At the global level the main focus of cooperation during the period under review was with UCLG to develop a strategy for disseminating the Guidelines on decentralization and the empowerment of local authorities, adopted by the Governing Council at its twenty-first session.

83. UCLG also participated actively in providing inputs for the policy and strategy papers for the global campaign on sustainable urbanization and focus areas 2 and 3 of the UN-Habitat medium-term strategic and institutional plan.

84. Also at the global level, UNEP, UN-Habitat and ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability entered into a tripartite agreement focusing on the role of cities in global environmental issues and city-to-city cooperation. UNEP, UN-Habitat and ICLEI have been working together on many issues and events, including the event "Local action — local solutions", held during the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in December 2007, and on the Local Government Climate Sessions, held during the fourteenth session of the Conference, in December 2008.

85. At the country level, one of the areas of growing interest and demand has been UN-Habitat collaboration with local authorities in the area of crime prevention and safety, with a particular focus on women and youth. Joint safety audits leading to crime prevention strategy formulation were carried out with local authorities in Burkina Faso, Burundi, Kenya and United Republic of Tanzania in Africa; in Colombia, Jamaica and Mexico in Latin America and the Caribbean; and in Serbia in Europe.

B. Civil society

86. Members of the Advisory Group on Forced Evictions to the Executive Director of UN-Habitat come from key Habitat Agenda partners such as the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights, COHRE, Environment and Development Action: ENDA-Tiers Monde, Habitat International Coalition, International Alliance of Inhabitants and Slum Dwellers International. The Advisory Group launched its second report and contributed to a training event on alternatives to unlawful forced eviction at the fourth session of the World Urban Forum, which was jointly organized with the Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies, COHRE and the Huairou Commission. Together with the International Cooperative Alliance, UN-Habitat prepared the document "Cooperative Housing Bibliography for Developing Countries".

87. The Global Land Tool Network, an initiative led by UN-Habitat and global partners, was addressed during the reporting period. There are over 30 regional and international partners that form the Network, including multilateral and bilateral organizations, members of international civil society, professional associations and research and training institutions. UN-Habitat organized an expert group meeting on the production of guidelines for land policy for Africa in collaboration with the African Union, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank. Work was also undertaken with COHRE, Hakijamii, the Huairou Commission and Shack Dwellers International to identify key grass-roots issues that should be taken into account in developing affordable land registration, acquisition and management systems.

88. UN-Habitat works with Habitat Partner Universities in building the capacity of tertiary institutions in teaching and research regarding the sound development of human settlements to meet the needs relevant to their context. The pilot phase of this initiative ended with a round-table event at the World Urban Forum in Nanjing, in which 40 universities from all over the world participated.

C. Private sector and service providers

89. Since June 2008, Global Water Operators Partnership Alliance missions have been fielded, including with the Netherlands Water Partnerships, the Abu Dhabi Water and Electricity Authority and the Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation of the Secretary-General, in efforts to strengthen partnerships. The Abu Dhabi Water and Electricity Authority has agreed to establish a regional water and sanitation office within its offices in Abu Dhabi to host and further strengthen the Global Water Operators Partnership Alliance secretariat.

90. The Global Water Operators Partnership Alliance, in collaboration with Cap-Net, started the development of integrated water resource management capacity-building materials for water utilities and the development of a geo-referenced utility benchmarking system with Google and IBNet. Workshops were held in July and November 2008 in relation to these two initiatives.

91. Operational projects in the area of water and sanitation, housing and urban data management were also implemented with private sector firms. Firms included Coca-Cola India, Oxyana Mines Australia, Google, BASF, as well as Merrill Lynch/Bank of America in partnership with the Global Housing Foundation.

92. In April 2007 a meeting was held of the Business Partnership for Sustainable Urbanization on making cities better places to work, to live and to do business. The Business Partnership for Sustainable Urbanization was launched as a new platform to disseminate and share first-hand knowledge on urbanization issues, stimulate the private sector's interest and create a framework that invites business to contribute effectively to sustainable urbanization.

VI. Pointers for the future

93. The adoption of the medium-term strategic and institutional plan for 2008-2013 renewed UN-Habitat's commitment to partnerships and cooperation, the importance of which was recognized in the Habitat Agenda. A key objective of the medium-term strategic and institutional plan is for UN-Habitat to pursue a robust and truly catalytic role. This objective has permeated the work of the entire programme throughout its normative, capacity-building and operational activities.

94. This commitment to partnerships and to cooperation could not have come at a more opportune time. In effect, there is a convergence of what used to be perceived as two separate agendas: a global environmental protection agenda and a local urban development agenda. In the face of climate change, these agendas represent two sides of the same coin. In a rapidly urbanizing world, climate change mitigation and adaptation require very similar approaches and solutions. They both place cities at the front line of action. They both require more effective urban planning, management and governance. They both require a concerted effort to improve the resilience of urban infrastructure and basic services.

95. The current economic downturn was initially brought on by a housing finance crisis and, as such, serves as a stark reminder that housing and urban development constitute the foundations of modern economic growth, wealth creation and development. In a predominantly urbanized world, access to affordable housing and basic urban infrastructure and services becomes a key determinant in the attainment

of development goals, be it in the area of health, education, safety and security or gender equality.

96. In the light of the above, it is recommended that the Economic and Social Council adopt the following decisions and recommendations:

(a) To adopt and promote sustainable urbanization as a cross-cutting issue for more effective follow-up action within the existing social, economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development;

(b) To endorse the convening of a special event of the General Assembly devoted to the theme of affordable finance for housing and urban development in the light of the current economic downturn and financial crisis;

(c) To recommend to the General Assembly, in the light of the convergence of the global environmental agenda and the sustainable urbanization agenda, to convene in 2016 the third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development.